



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**PANAMA**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 27, 2005

Fact Sheet No.: FS-06-04-E

Press Office Tel.: 202-712-4320

Public Information Tel.: 202-712-4810

Email: [usaid-panamainfo@usaid.gov](mailto:usaid-panamainfo@usaid.gov)

<http://www.usaid.gov>

## FACT SHEET

### RULING JUSTLY

This program aims to: 1) strengthen the rule of law by improving the justice system, facilitate citizens' access to justice, and assure civil society participation in promoting judicial reforms; 2) improve transparency and accountability in government by supporting reform of the legal framework for transparency, and develop Panamanian capacity to curtail, investigate, and prosecute corruption cases; and 3) strengthen citizen watchdog groups, and promote ethical values in public and private institutions.

In FY 2005, USAID support catalyzed significant achievements, including:

- Establishment of the National Anticorruption Council which is operational and gaining public support
- Development of the Council's Anticorruption Strategy
- Increased Public Awareness and Support for Combating Corruption.

Activities included workshops, training sessions, and observational trips on transparency and accountability. Also, the Council's Secretariat has a greater understanding of the nature and outreach of its mandate and is better equipped to effectively implement anticorruption initiatives.

The anticorruption strategic plan, recently developed by the Council with USAID support, is an example of the institutional strengthening that has occurred. The Council also helped launch the National Integrity Week, under the theme, "For a Panama Free of Corruption." Events were organized and co-sponsored by various public entities and civil society organizations, and more than 40 newspaper articles were disseminated by radio and television broadcasts throughout the country.

Other USAID-supported activities included:

- Public campaigns to increase awareness and support for anticorruption and transparency
- Training of 25 public sector servants in the inspection and audit of public works
- Participation by the National Anticorruption Council at the Latin-American Conference on Gender and Corruption
- Distance-learning courses for the Council's Executive Secretariat staff. Training covered ethics, transparency, anticorruption, and lessons learned for improving access to public information.

USAID also helped Panama's civil society organizations and partnered with the United Nations Development Program to galvanize public support for fundamental justice sector reforms. For instance,

- Building upon the partnership forged under the previous Administration of Justice program with the Citizens' Alliance for Justice, a coalition of 15 civil society organizations, USAID awarded two small grants for \$105,000. These awards helped to foment stronger advocacy for justice reform.
- With USAID support, the Alliance held a forum that led to the creation of a Commission on Justice Reforms. The Alliance also worked effectively with the news media to expose several cases of alleged misconduct.
- The Alliance collaborated with the representatives of institutions engaged in administering justice who participated in the Commission on Justice Reforms, playing a lead role in assuring that the Commission's efforts remained focused and on track. As a result, the Commission produced a National Agenda for Justice Reforms. The President of Panama has endorsed the National Agenda.